# NANCY HANKS

## THE STORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MOTHER

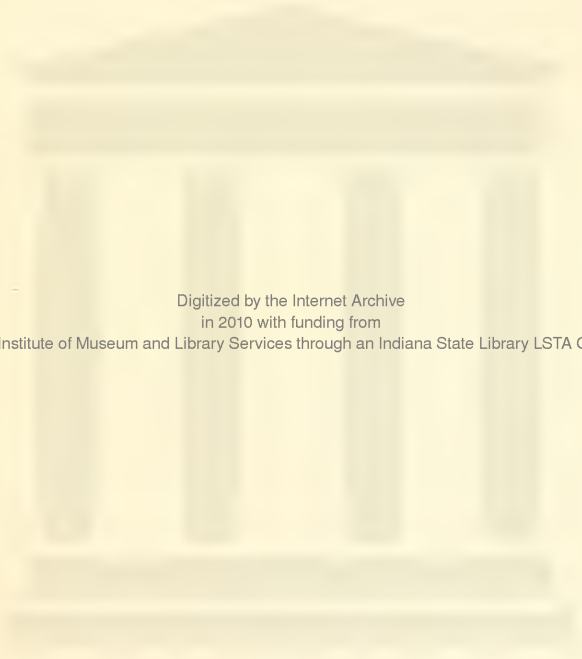
Reserve Storage

HITCHCOCK
IM 1252
1. 1899
2. 1900
3. " Leather
4. " M'C. Phillips

LINCOLN NATIONAL
LIFE FOUNDATION

M1252[1])

# NANCY HANKS



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant

http://www.archive.org/details/nancyhanksstory1552hitc

ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S BIRTHPLACE.

# NANCY HANKS

THE STORY OF : : : :
ABRAHAM LINCOLN'S MOTHER

*BY*

Caroline Hanks Hitchcock

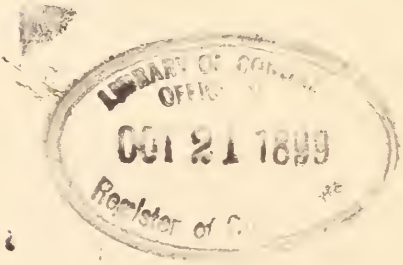
NEW YORK
DOUBLEDAY & MCCLURE CO.
1899

2nd COPY DELIVERED TO THE
OCT 26 1899
Library of Congress

LIBRARY
OF
CONGRESS
DUPLICATE
EXCHANGE

Copyright, 1899
By DOUBLEDAY & McCLURE CO

TWO COPIES RECEIVED.




FIRST COPY.
67984
Oct. 20, '99.

"A dirge for the brave old pioneer!
Columbus of the land!
Who guided freedom's proud career
Beyond the conquered strand,
And gave her pilgrim sons a home
No monarch step profanes,
Free as the chainless winds that roam
Upon its boundless plains."

# PREFACE

To no woman whose name is of interest in American history has greater injustice been done by biographers than to Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. This injustice has been in repeating or allowing to go unchallenged traditions of her early life of which there were no proofs.

Daughter of a pioneer, wedded with a pioneer, Nancy Hanks spent her life in a conflict with the wilderness. Dying in 1818, when only 35 years old, she was

buried in the woods of Indiana. Her simple life would have passed away as unremembered as the flowers with which she grew up had she not left behind her a son who forty-two years after his mother's death became the leader of one of the great political parties of the United States in a bitter civil struggle. When this son was placed at the head of his party his name was unfamiliar to much of the country; he himself knew little of his family: he did not even possess records to show when and where his father and mother were married. His opponents saw the opportunity to belittle him, and they spread the story that he not only was of humble origin, as he

himself publicly acknowledged, but was a nameless child—that Thomas Lincoln was not his father.

Later they deepened the stain on his mother's name by hinting that she herself was a waif—fatherless like her boy. There was never any proof produced in support of the stories—curiously enough the first in particular took many forms. Lincoln's father's name was said in one account to be Enloe, in another Calhoun, in another Hardin and several different States laid claim to a share in his ancestry. Even in the present year a book has been published in North Carolina to prove that his father was a resident of that State. The bulk of the testimony in this

volume is from persons who were born long after Abaham Lincoln, who never saw him or his parents, and never heard the story they repeat until after his nomination to the Presidency.

The present book, by Mrs. Caroline Hanks Hitchcock, of Cambridge, Mass., is an attempt to clear the name of Nancy Hanks Lincoln of these falsifications. It is based not on hearsay or tradition, but on documents which Mrs. Hitchcock herself has discovered or verified. Her interest in Nancy Hanks grew naturally out of a work she undertook some years ago—the genealogy of the Hanks family in America. In tracing the descendants of the founder of the

family in America, Benjamin Hanks who came from England to Plymouth County, Mass., in 1699, she discovered that one of his sons, William, moved to Virginia and that in the latter part of the eighteenth century his children formed in Amelia County of that State a large settlement. All the records of these families she found in the Hall of Records in Richmond. When the migration into Kentucky began, late in the century, it was joined by many members of the Hanks settlement in Amelia County. Among others to go was Joseph Hanks with his wife Nancy Shipley Hanks and their children. Mrs. Hitchcock traced this Joseph Hanks,

by means of land records to Nelson County, Ky., where she found that he died in 1793, leaving behind a will, which she discovered in the records of Bardstown, Ky. This will shows that at the time of his death Joseph Hanks had living eight children, to whom he bequeathed property. The youngest of these was "my daughter Nancy," as the will puts it.

Mrs. Hitchcock's first query, on reading this will, was, "can it be that this little girl—she was but nine years old when her father died—is the Nancy Hanks who sixteen years later became the mother of Abraham Lincoln?" She determined to find out. She learned from relations and friends

of the family of Joseph Hanks still living that, soon after her father's death, Nancy went to live with an uncle, Richard Berry, who, the records showed, had come from Virginia to Kentucky at the same time that Joseph Hanks came. A little further research, and Mrs. Hitchcock found that there had been brought to light through the efforts of friends of Abraham Lincoln all the documents to show that in 1806 Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married at Beechland, Ky. Now, one of these documents was a marriage bond. It was signed by Richard Berry, the uncle of the little girl recognized in the will of Joseph Hanks. Here, then, was the chain complete. The mar-

riage bond and marriage returns not only showed that Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln were married regularly three years before the birth of Abraham Lincoln, thus setting forever at rest the story of Lincoln's illegitimacy, but they showed that this Nancy Hanks was the one named in the will. The suspicion in regard to the origin of Lincoln's mother was removed by this discovery of the will, for the recognition of any one as his child, by a man in his will is considered by the law as sufficient proof of paternity.

When convinced that she had the documentary proofs which would clear the name of Nancy Hanks, Mrs. Hitchcock concluded

that she ought not to withhold them from the world until she could publish her elaborate genealogy. She saw that the biographies of Lincoln which came out almost yearly were only fixing more firmly in the public mind cruel and false traditions. She accordingly prepared the following simple story of the life of Nancy Hanks, and with it publishes the documents which she has collected. This book will, we believe, silence forever in the minds of unprejudiced readers the painful doubts which have rested on the origin of Abraham Lincoln. It shows that his mother was of sturdy English origin; that she came, like her husband, from a family

whose men and women did not fear to cross a sea or penetrate a wilderness to win land and home; that she bore an honest name and gave an honest life to her son.

The service Mrs. Hitchcock renders to American history by thus publishing in an accessible form the results of her researches on the Hanks family so far as they concern the mother of Abraham Lincoln is a large and important one. She deserves the gratitude of every admirer of Lincoln and of every lover of truth.

I. M. T.

# Contents.


PAGE

CHAPTER I. . . . . 1

CHAPTER II. . . . . 20

CHAPTER III. . . . . 46

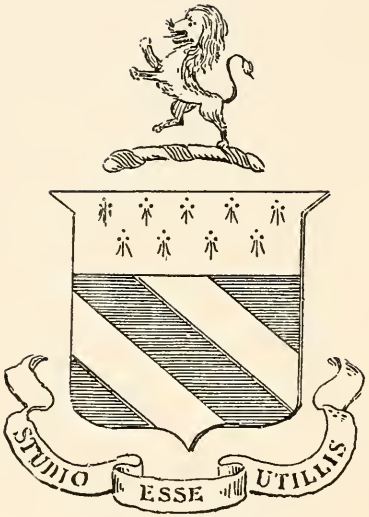
CHAPTER IV. . . . . 70

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Abraham Lincoln's Birthplace,
*Frontispiece.*
The Hanks Coat of Arms, facing page 1
Frontispiece to the "First Centennial Report of the Black Valley Railroad," by S. W. Hanks, . . page 17
Facsimile of Will Left by Joseph Hanks, . . between pages 42 and 43
Minister's Return of Marriage of Nancy Hanks to Thomas Lincoln, . . . . . page 55
Facsimile of Thomas Lincoln's Marriage Bond, . . . . page 60
Marriage Certificate of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, . . page 63
Rock Creek Spring, . facing page 76

Portraits of Abraham Lincoln and
Rev. Stedman Wright Hanks,
between pages 86 and 87
The Lincoln Farm in Indiana,
facing page 100
The Grave of Nancy Hanks,
facing page 104

# NANCY HANKS




HANKES.

The Hanks Coat of Arms.

# NANCY HANKS.

## CHAPTER I.

ALL the branches of the Hanks family throughout England and America seem to have come from the beautiful old town of Malmsbury in Wiltshire. It was not far from Malmsbury in Edington, Wiltshire, that in 878 Alfred the Great defeated the Danes, who had overrun the whole kingdom of the West Saxons. All the Malmsbury men who fought in this battle under Alfred the Great

were rewarded with certain tracts of land, which are still held by the descendants of these old families. Among these so-called "Commoners," each of whom had five hundred acres, were two brothers of the name Hankes, whose descendants still hold the "Commoner's rights" in Malmsbury, King Athelstan, the grandson of Alfred the Great, having given them one charter, King John another later and so on.

This ancient town of Malmsbury is ninety-six miles from London. The celebrated "Foss road," one of the four great military roads which the Romans constructed, runs near Malmsbury, through Cirencester, Stow, and other cities

up to London and York, and into the far north to Scotland. Malmsbury is also near the marvellous ruins at Stonehenge, built, it is believed, ages ago by those ancient Egyptians, who built the Sphinx and the Pyramids. As the word Ank (H[ank]s) itself is an Egyptian word meaning *soul*, it is believed that this family had lived in Malmsbury for long ages.

They were a clannish race, and for centuries it is said many of them never left their native home. It is recorded that one of the Hanks family was at one time shot by the other members of the family because he had ventured to leave his native home, and they feared he would "mix the breed."

This was nearly a thousand years ago, in King Athelstan's time, when they considered it an absolute crime to "sleep out of town."

It was along the old Roman Foss road that the descendants of the Hanks family travelled when they first left their native heath. As far as the English records have been completed the following facts have been gleaned concerning this removal: About 1550 Thomas Hanks moved from Malmsbury, with his brother George and sister Ann, and settled in Stow-on-the-Wold. Here he married and had three children, Henry, Marie, and Thomas, Jr. Thomas, Jr., also married and had four children—

Grace, Mary, Thomas 3d, and Edmund. Thomas 3d, who is said to have been a soldier under Oliver Cromwell, also had four children—John, Joseph, Thomas 4th, and William. Joseph moved from Stow to Donington, and had, it is believed, five children—Benjamin, William, Stephen, Hester, and Mary, one of whom, Benjamin, with his wife, Abigail, came to America. It is believed that they sailed with their friends Richard and Catherine White, who, as their old record book states, "came from London, October 17th, 1699," and landed in Plymouth, Mass. This Benjamin Hanks was the great-grandfather of Nancy Hanks, the mother of

Abraham Lincoln, sixteenth President of the United States.

According to the old deeds in Plymouth, we find that Benjamin first settled in Pembroke, Plymouth County, and among the parish records of the Rev. Daniel Lewis we find the births of his children:

Abigail, born June 8th, 1701.
Benjamin, July 16th, 1702.
William, February 11th, 1704.
Nathaniel, April 15th, 1705.
Annah, November 14th, 1706.
Mary, February 14th, 1708.
John, October 22d, 1709.
Elizabeth, March 5th, 1711.
Rachell, May 2d, 1712.
Joannah, October 9th, 1713.
James, February 24th, 1715.

These children were all born in

Benjamin's first home on his land, "consisting of thirty acres, being in the township of Pembroke, which township is part of the thirty-fifth lot in ye land commonly known by ye name of Major's Purchase." Here they all lived until Abigail, the wife and mother, died in the year 1725. Two years later Benjamin married Mary Ripley, of Bridgewater, and moved to Easton, where another son, Jacob, was born. In 1736 he moved again to Plymouth, where he bought of Robert Bartlett, "for the sum of seven hundred pounds . . . seven-eights parts of the uplands and beach of the Island of Saguish, lying and being in the harbor of Plymouth, together with

all the dwelling-houses, barns, and fences on said island standing, and being also two pieces of salt marsh and meadow to the said island adjoining." He later, June 6th, 1745, bought the rest of Saguish for eighty pounds, "paid by Benjamin Hanks of Plymouth in the County of Plymouth, yeoman, for my one-eighth part of the upland or place commonly called Saguish in Plymouth aforesaid, with my right in the beach."

In describing this part of the country Justin Winsor says: "The pleasant bays of Plymouth, Kingston, and Duxbury, enlivened by passing boats and sheltered from the raging ocean by the beach, is crowned at its southern extremity

by a lighthouse and with the extending arm of Saguish enclosing the island of the pilgrims." It was here in Saguish, once owned by Benjamin Hanks, that Fort Standish was built during the Civil War, and that the French cable was laid July 27th, 1869. At a dinner given in Plymouth to commemorate the successful laying of this cable and the telegraphic union of France and the United States, Judge Russell said:

"It seems to me almost a dream that we are assembled here in this quiet corner of our dear old colony to celebrate the laying of a cable which connects all the habitable parts of the globe. We stand on sacred soil. Here this land is

privileged to hold the home and the burial place of Alden, of Standish, and of Brewster. Yes, even to-day you can show us the roof by which John Alden was sheltered, and the Bible by which he was comforted. You can carry us down to the cliffs from which Miles Standish looked out upon the little place of which he was the guard, and dreamed perhaps of the great empire of which he was one of the founders. Here, as much as if we stood on Plymouth rock, we are on Pilgrim soil. As the *Great Eastern* neared the shores, it seems to me that in the gray mass of wire that lay coiled in her hold there was a mighty power that should electrify

the earth. So when these brave men stepped forth from the cabin of the *Mayflower* there was unrevealed and undeveloped a power that should thrill the world. France! England! America! May they lead the world in peace, and may their national ensigns float together in amity until all the nations of the earth have become the United States!"

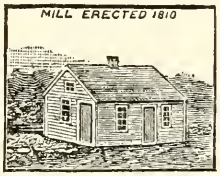
From the old records we find the history of the descendants of Benjamin Hanks is interwoven in the annals of New England, where they are known as "a remarkably inventive family" and "a family of founders." The first bells ever made in America were cast on Hanks Hill in their old New

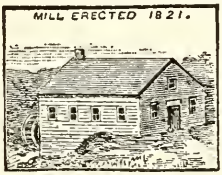
England farm. It was one of the descendants of this Benjamin Hanks who placed in the steeple of the old Dutch church in New York City, which formerly stood where the post-office now is, the first tower clock in America, a unique affair, run by a windmill attachment. The bells and chimes made by this family are now ringing all over the world, on land and sea, one of them being the bell in Philadelphia which replaced the old Liberty bell, and another being the great Columbian Liberty bell, which hung in front of the Administration Building at the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893. This bell weighed thirteen thousand pounds, to represent the

thirteen original States, and was made from relics of gold, silver, old coins and metal sent from all parts of the world. On the Columbian Liberty bell were inscribed the words, by the great-great-great-grandson of the first Benjamin Hanks of Plymouth: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." "Proclaim Liberty throughout all the land and unto all the inhabitants thereof." "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another."

Other members of this family have sent the first libraries far away throughout the world to those toilers who "go down to the sea in ships, that do business in

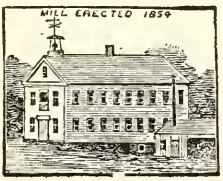
great waters." They have also erected the first silk mills in America run by water power, and made the first cannon carried by the Connecticut artillery into the battles in which many of them gave their lives for their country. For the United States army and navy during the Revolution, their inventions in almost every department are almost innumerable. Their Sunday-school publications and work in the Hebrew language and literature, in connection with the history of the Bible, are well known everywhere. Graduates of almost every university in America, there have been among them noted doctors, lawyers, ministers, and writers. The Black Val-

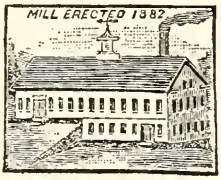



RODNEY HANKS ERECTED IN 1810, THE FIRST SILK MILL IN AMERICA.

THE OLDEST AND BEST BRAND OF SILK ON THIS CONTINENT.



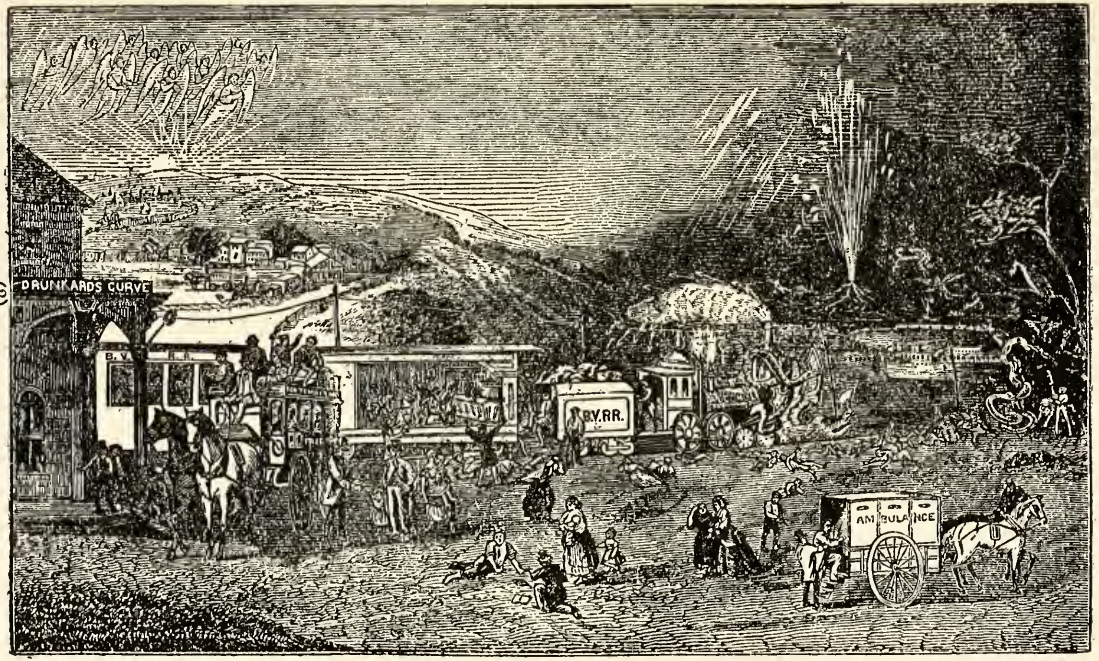

Facsimile from Circular of the Hanks Silk Mill.

ley temperance illustrations were made by one of Benjamin's descendants, and another was one of the founders of the American Bank Note Company. In a little pamphlet entitled "Hanksite," a new anhydrous sulphato-carbonate from San Bernardine County, Cal., by William Earl Hidden, dated Newark, N. J., May 23d, 1885, we read:

"In a very complete and attractive exhibit of California minerals brought to the World's Industrial and Cotton Centennial Exposition at New Orleans by Prof. Henry G. Hanks, State mineralogist of California, were several species of unusual interest. . . . Sometimes the crystals are confusedly grouped

On the left, at top, a train is leaving the region of Churches and Fountains and hovering Angels for the *Black Valley*. In the foreground the red flagmen are giving warning to travellers and helping the *Outcasts* into the *Fountainland stages* and the *Ambulances*. Forward of the saloon is the *fireman* and owner of the road. In the background, on the right, is the great *Black Valley* and the end of the road, from which the only telegram that ever comes is,

"At the last it biteth like a Serpent and stingeth like an Adder!"




STATISTICS.—600,000 travelers at Drunkard's Curve, 400,000 at Beggarstown, 100,000 at Prisonton. 60,000 killed. 735 millions lost by travelers. 60,000,000 bushels grain consumed. 500,000 employees.

Copyright, 1876, S. W. HANKS.

Frontispiece to the "First Centennial Report of the Black Valley Railroad," by S. W. Hanks.

as from a common centre, much like the aragonite from a noted European locality. . . . The definite formula deduced from Mr. McKintosh's analysis, taken together with the form, warrants me in announcing these crystals as a new mineral species. I therefore proposed for it the name of 'Hanksite,' after Prof. Henry G. Hanks, of California, than whom no man has done more to give the world a correct knowledge of the minerals of the great States of our Pacific Coast." (From the *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. III., No. 7.)

Of all these things the history of the Hanks family in America gives a detailed account, and it is

therefore not necessary to enter into further particulars here. Suffice it to say that the mother of Abraham Lincoln belonged to a family which has given to America some of her finest minds and most heroic hearts.

## CHAPTER II.

THE records of the marriages of all the children of Benjamin Hanks are found in the Plymouth County books, with the exception of that of the third child, William. According to the statements and traditions of the various members of the family in both the Northern and Southern States, it seems that William early left the old home and embarked on one of the many vessels then sailing between Massachusetts and Virginia. They also say he settled in Virginia, near the mouth of the Rap-

pahannock River, where his sons Abraham, Richard, James, John, and Joseph were born. The New England custom house records have unfortunately been destroyed "to make room for papers of more recent date," as one of the officers said, so that we have not the name of the ship on which William sailed to Virginia. All of his children, with the exception of John, moved to Amelia County, Va., where they bought large plantations near each other.

The youngest son, Joseph, must have moved to Amelia County with the rest about 1740. According to deeds preserved in Richmond, Va., he sold on January 12th, 1747, to his brother, Abra-

ham Hanks, "two hundred and eighty-four acres lying and being in the county of Amelia on the lower side of Seller Creek . . . thence along Joseph Hanks' line E. 30 N. 122 poles to his corner red oak," etc. On July 12th, 1754, he bought the land on which he then settled, and where all his children were born, the youngest of whom was Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. This old deed is worded in part:

"George the Second, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith—do give, grant and confirm unto Joseph Hanks one certain tract or parcel of land containing 246 acres lying

and being in the county of Amelia, on the upper side of Sweathouse Creek and bounded as following, to wit: Beginning at William Tucker's corner in Abraham Hanks' line . . . thence North 140 poles along Abraham Hanks' line to the beginning with all the woods, under woods, swamps and marshes, low grounds, meadows, Feedings and his due share of all the veins, mines and quarries, as well discovered as not discovered . . . and the rivers, waters, and water courses therein contained, together with the privileges of hunting, hawking, fishing, fowling . . . unto the said Joseph Hanks and to his heirs and assigns forever. . . . To be held

of us, our heirs and successors as of our Manor of East Greenwich in this County of Kent . . . the fee rent one shilling yearly, to be paid upon the Feast of Saint Michael the Archangel," etc.

Other deeds recorded in Richmond show that near Joseph's farm, in Amelia County, his brother Abraham owned 284 acres, his brother Richard 243 acres, and his brother James Hanks, 200 acres of land.

In the next county to Amelia, Lurenburg, an Englishman named Robert Shipley bought 314 acres of land, September 16th, 1765. He and his wife, Sarah Rachael Shipley, had five daughters—Mary, who married Abraham Lin-

coln of Rockingham County, Va., grandfather of President Lincoln; Lucy, who married Richard Berry; Sarah, who married Robert Mitchell; Elizabeth, who married Thomas Sparrow; and Nancy, who married Joseph Hanks, of Amelia County.

Joseph and Nancy Shipley Hanks had eight children—Thomas, Joshua, William, Charles, Joseph, Jr., Elizabeth, Polly, and Nancy. This Nancy, the youngest child, was born February 5th, 1784, and named for her mother, although the quaint, old-fashioned name Nancy is a favorite one in the Hanks family throughout England and America. This little Nancy

Hanks had also many cousins named Nancy, one of whom was Nancy Sparrow, the daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth Shipley Sparrow, who was one of her constant playmates and dearest friends. Theirs was a large and happy colony of cousins, and merry were the days passed in hunting, hawking, and fishing in the great estates of nearly a thousand acres owned by these kind uncles and aunts. It was here in old Virginia that little Nancy lived until she was five years old, when about 1789 her parents decided to find a new home in the then distant lands of Kentucky. They did not, however, go alone on their long journey into the wilderness. With

them went the Mitchells, Shipleys, Berrys, Sparrows, and also Abraham Hanks, Joseph's brother, with his family. An examination of the deeds of Amelia County shows that at about the same date all of these families disposed of their Virginia property. And their names also first appear in the Kentucky records at about the same time. Among all the descendents of these families there are also preserved traditions of this large family migration.

They made the journey when that great migration into Kentucky, which marked the last two decades of the eighteenth century, was at its height. It had begun when Daniel Boone and James

Harrod had succeeded in establishing in 1774 and 1775 stations at the points now known as Harrodsburg and Boonesborough, and had increased at such a rate that in 1784, when John Filson published his "History of Kentucky," the population of the new country was estimated at 30,000. The Hanks families had seen much of this migration. Indeed, in 1775, Nancy's uncle, Abraham Hanks, had gone with a company of explorers into the wilderness, and had suffered hardships and seen adventures that no doubt he had related many a time to his nieces and nephews in the long twilight around the great log fires in old Virginia.

These adventures of Abraham Hanks have been faithfully preserved for us in a journal kept by one of his companions. According to this journal Abraham started with a party of friends on Monday, March 13th, 1775. On the first day his dog broke its leg, and then the recorder states that on Thursday, the 30th, "Abrahm's beast burst open a wallet of corn and lost a good deal, and made a terrible flustration among the rest of the horses." This excitement was bad enough, but worse was to follow, for on Wednesday, the 5th of April, "Abrahm's saddle turned and the load all fell in;" now this was a very serious matter, for those pack saddles contained all

the worldly goods of those pioneer emigrants. Mr. Thomas Speed in "The Wilderness Road" says of this saddle: "It was a rude contrivance made of a forked branch of a tree in keeping with the primitive simplicity of the times. When fastened upon a horse it became the receptacle of the goods and chattels to be transported. Thus were carried provisions for the journey and household stuff and utensils needed to make life tolerable when the journey was ended and the place of residence selected. The fork had to be a particular shape, and the branch of a tree, which could be made into a saddle, was an attractive object. It is related

that an early preacher once paused in his Sunday sermon with his eyes fixed on the top of a tree and said: 'I want to remark right here that yonder is one of the best forks for a pack saddle that I ever saw in the woods. When services are over we will get it.'"

When Joseph Hanks and his friends made the journey west, the route was much easier and safer than when Abraham Hanks had made it. The great majority of all the emigration into Kentucky at this time, even from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New England, came by the Virginia valley, thence to Cumberland Gap, and thence by what was known as the Wilderness road,

running northwest from the Gap to the Ohio at Louisville.* It was a mere bridle path through the forest and over the mountains, but this route was preferred to the one by Pittsburg and the Ohio River. Much travel had improved it greatly in comparison to what it was during the first five years after the migration had begun. The legislature of Virginia since 1779 had indeed concerned itself about the route, so great was the number of Virginians seeking a home in Kentucky.

* The history of the Wilderness road has been fully and admirably told by Mr. Thomas Speed, of Kentucky, in a work published by the Filson Club of Louisville, Ky., "The Wilderness Road."

But in spite of travel and legislation it was, at least from Cumberland Gap, nothing but a footpath, over which the parties travelled in single file with their goods and children and sometimes the women on horseback, and their stock driven behind. Of course, they went in as large companies as could be got together, for Indians and wild beasts still abounded. It was even customary at this time to advertise that parties would start at such and such times in order to increase the safety of all by making the number as large as possible. We know from the accounts left by those Kentucky pioneers that their journeys were often at-

tended by grave perils and hardships, even after every preparation had been made and every precaution taken. Chief Justice Robertson, in the story of his own father and mother's journey, speaks of that "tide of emigrants who, exchanging all the comforts of their native society and homes for settlements for themselves and their children here, came like pilgrims to a wilderness, to be made secure by their arms and habitable by the toil of their lives. Through privations incredible and perils thick, thousands of men, women, and children came in successive caravans, forming continuous streams of human beings, horses, cattle, and other domestic animals, all

moving onward along a lonely and houseless path to a wild and cheerless land. Cast your eyes back on that long procession of missionaries in the cause of civilization; behold the men on foot, with their trusty guns on their shoulders, driving stock and leading pack-horses; and the women, some walking with pails on their heads, others riding with children in their laps, and other children swung in baskets on horses, fastened to the tails of others going before; see them encamped at night, expecting to be massacred by Indians; behold them in the month of December, in that memorable season of unprecedented cold called the 'hard winter,'

travelling two or three miles a day, frequently in danger of being frozen or killed by the falling of horses on the icy and almost impassable tract, and subsisting on stinted allowances of stale bread and meat."

Mrs. Tevis has also given a vivid description of this dangerous journey, which it was the destiny of our little Nancy Hanks to take at the age of five years. She said: "At the time my grandfather with his brothers and sisters came to Kentucky, many families travelled together for mutual safety and protection against the Indians, whose hunting grounds extended to the border settlements of Virginia. On their way through the

wilderness they encountered bear, buffalo, wolves, wildcats, and sometimes herds of deer. Thus they moved cautiously onward in a long line through a narrow bridle path, so encumbered with brush and underwood as to impede their progress, and render it necessary that they should at times encamp for days in order to rest their weary pack-horses and forage for themselves."

As Mr. Speed says: "The accounts of the travel over the Wilderness road excite admiration for the courage and hardihood of the bold men who inaugurated and guided it; they also arouse strong sympathy for the women and children who cheerfully

shared the privations entailed on them. There is a deep pathos in the story of that great journeying, as the imagination readily pictures the companies of men, women, and children moving through the wilderness. . . . The great emigration from 1775 to 1795, a period of twenty years, was a movement on foot. Many of the accounts of the foot travel of that day, if not authenticated beyond question, would read like fables of antiquity."

Happily no grave accidents, so far as we know, threatened the party of which Joseph Hanks and his family were members. No Indians or wild beasts attacked them. There were even no hard-

ships which have come down in tradition. No doubt, to the little girl Nancy the whole journey was a delight, if made, as doubtless it was, from a safe perch on the pack-saddle of one of her father's horses.

It is probable that Joseph Hanks had made a previous journey into Kentucky, or through some friend had selected and entered the land to which the family went at the end of their long and perilous journey. It was usual for a pioneer who contemplated moving to prospect in the new country before venturing to take his family there. The farm on which Joseph settled consisted of one hundred and fifty acres near Elizabethtown, in what is now Nelson County. The In-

dians were still disputing the right to Kentucky with the pioneers, and by the time that Joseph Hanks came into the country it was customary for the settlers to live in stockades for mutual protection. Such a stockade had existed since 1780, where Elizabethtown now stands. It was composed of three forts and several blockhouses. It was not until 1793 that Elizabethtown was laid out as a village and the yellow poplar logs, of which the first court-house was built, cut and made ready.

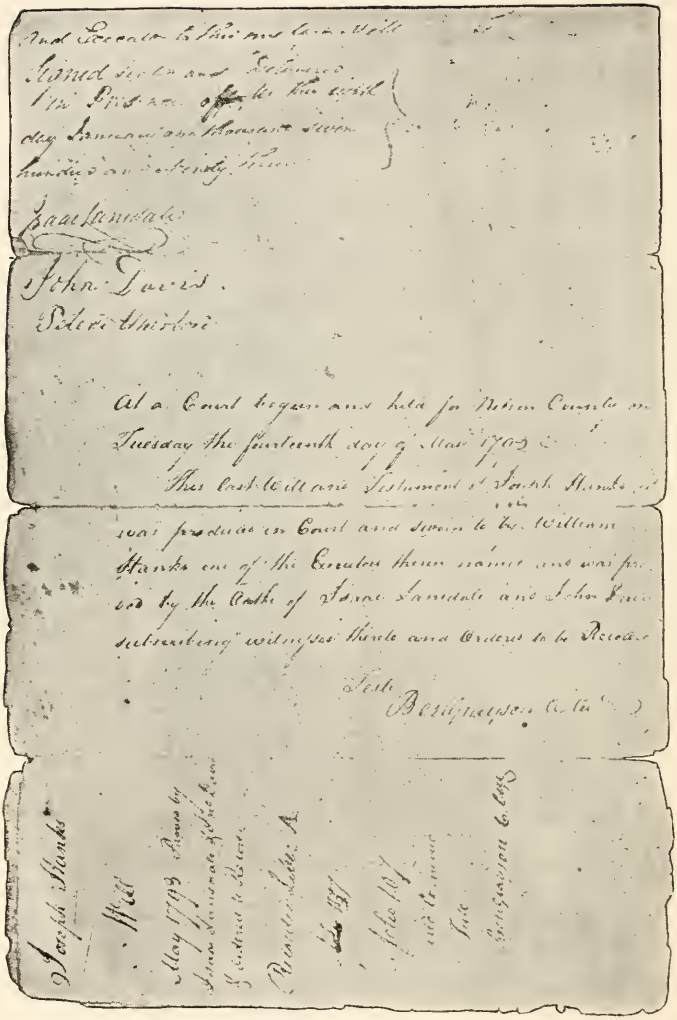
The first year of the Hanks family in Kentucky was spent, no doubt, in cutting logs for the new cabin into which they were to move, and in cultivating the

fields. The winter was spent in hunting and fishing and exploring the new country. All of this work was done more or less in company with their friends and relatives, the Sparrows, Berrys, and Mitchells, who had formed a settlement a few miles away, near the present town of Springfield, Washington County.

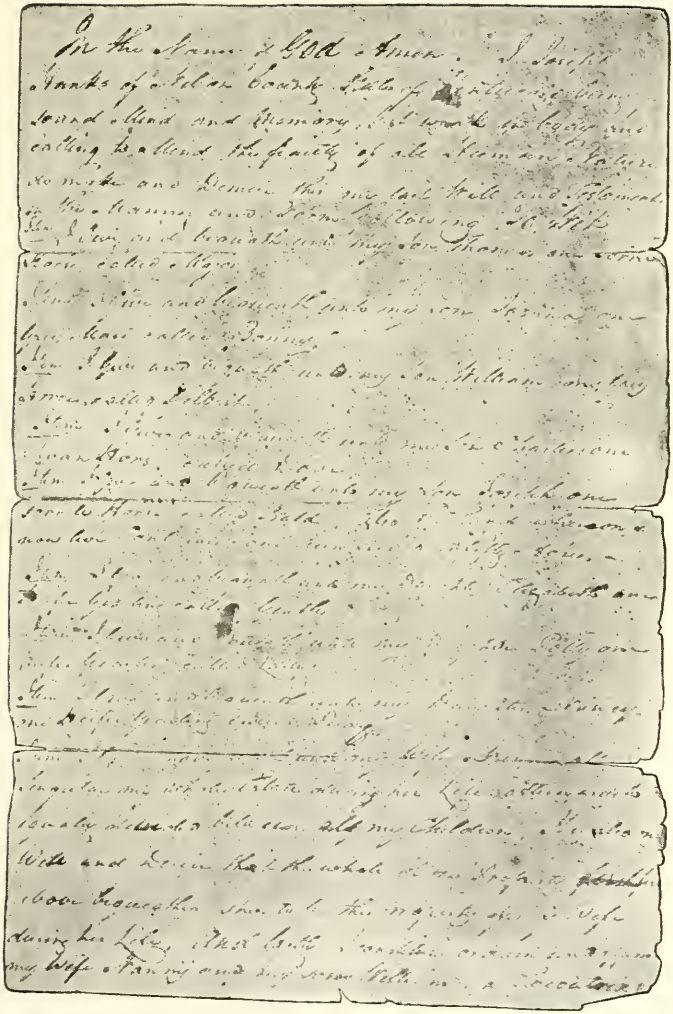
Joseph Hanks lived but four years after he came to Kentucky, yet he had at his death a goodly amount of stock for that time. His will, dated January 9th, 1793, and probated May 14th, 1793, reads as follows:

"In the name of God Amen. I, Joseph Hanks of Nelson County, State of Kentucky, being

of sound mind and memory, but weak in body and calling to mind the frailty of all human nature, do make and demise this my last will and testament in the manner and form following, to wit: Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Thomas one sorrel horse called Major. Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Joshua one gray mare Bonny. Item. I give and bequeath unto my son William one gray horse called Gilbert. Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Charles one roan horse called Tobe. Item. I give and bequeath unto my son Joseph one horse called Bald. Also the land whereon I now live, containing one hundred and fifty acres.



Facsimile of Will Left



by Joseph Hanks.

Item. I give and bequeath unto my daughter Elizabeth one heifer yearling called Gentle. Item. I give and bequeath unto my daughter Polly one heifer yearling called Lady. I give and bequeath unto my daughter Nancy one heifer yearling called Peidy. Item. I give and bequeath unto my wife Nanny all and singular my whole estate during her life, afterward to be equally divided between all my children. It is also my wish and desire that the whole of the property first above bequeathed should be the property of my wife during her life. And lastly, I constitute, ordain, and appoint my wife Nanny and my son William as my executrix and

executor to this my last will and Testament."

It is evident from this will that Nancy Hanks' father was not a slave owner, although he had a large estate and must have had negroes to work the plantation. He had doubtless freed them all before he died, for he certainly did not will them away, as was customary in those days, when negroes were almost always disposed of in the following manner: "I give and bequeath to my beloved daughter one negro woman named Molly during her natural life, and at her death the said Molly and her increase hereafter to be equally divided among all her children."

This document shows something more, however, than the amount of property which a prosperous pioneer of that time would have to bequeath, and has told something more than that Joseph Hanks was not a slave holder. It settles the question of Nancy Hanks' parentage, showing that she had a father who recognized her in his will with the same generosity that he did her brothers and sisters.

## CHAPTER III.

AFTER Joseph Hanks' death his children married and scattered. The genealogy of the Hanks family in America (soon to be published) gives the history of all his descendants. The only ones mentioned here, will therefore be those who were most intimately associated with the life of Nancy Hanks, the mother of Abraham Lincoln. These were Nancy's brothers, William and Joseph, and her sisters, Elizabeth and Mary, or Polly, as she was sometimes called, all of whom,

except Polly, moved later to Indiana and lived near their sister Nancy. William was the first to marry. In the old marriage returns to be seen at Bardstown, Ky., is the following entry: "On the 12th day of September, 1793, by Joseph Dodge, minister, William Hanks and Elizabeth Hall." This Elizabeth, who thus became Nancy's sister-in-law, was of a Virginia family which, like the Hankses, had recently moved into Kentucky. William and Elizabeth Hall Hanks had eleven children, one of whom, John Hanks, figures largely in the early life of Abraham Lincoln. Nancy's sister Elizabeth also married into the

same family, becoming Mrs. Levi Hall. Elizabeth and Levi Hall were the children of Mrs. Hall, of Greensburg, Kentucky, whose husband was killed by the Indians, and who a few years later married Caleb Hazel, Abraham Lincoln's first teacher. Among the marriage records of the Rev. Benjamin Ogden, of Elizabethtown, Ky., it is found that Joseph Hanks and Polly Young were married November 10th, 1810. It would seem that this son Joseph had been remembered rather more generously by his father than his brother, for the will reads: "I give and bequeath unto my son Joseph one horse called Bald; also the land whereon I now live, containing 150 acres." Jos-

eph seems to have been the only one of the children who received land by his father's will. And he continued to live at Elizabethtown, his place being known as "Red Hill." He must have been well-to-do, for old deeds make note of his owning horses, implements, furniture, and stock. He was by trade a carpenter and cabinet-maker.

The second sister of Nancy, in whom we are interested, Mary, or Polly, was married by the same minister as her brother William, the Rev. Joseph Dodge. His returns show that this marriage took place at Elizabethtown on December 10th, 1795. Her husband was Jesse Friend, whose brother Charles married Nancy Sparrow

and had a son named Dennis, who has been often mentioned as one of the Hanks family.

Nancy Hanks was but nine years old when her father died, and soon the dear mother also followed her husband. The little orphan then went to live with her mother's sister, Mrs. Richard Berry, *née* Shipley, at Beachland, a pretty place near Springfield. Here all her aunts, uncles, and cousins on her mother's side, the Mitchells, Shipleys, and Berrys, had settled when Joseph Hanks made his home in Elizabethtown. With this kind "Uncle Richard and Aunt Lucy" Nancy lived until she was married, the constant playmate and be-

loved friend of her two cousins, Frank and Ned Berry. Theirs was a merry life for a few years there in old Kentucky, and the beautiful Nancy Hanks seems to have been the centre and leader in all the merry country parties. Bright, scintillating, noted for her keen wit and repartee, she had withal a great loving heart.

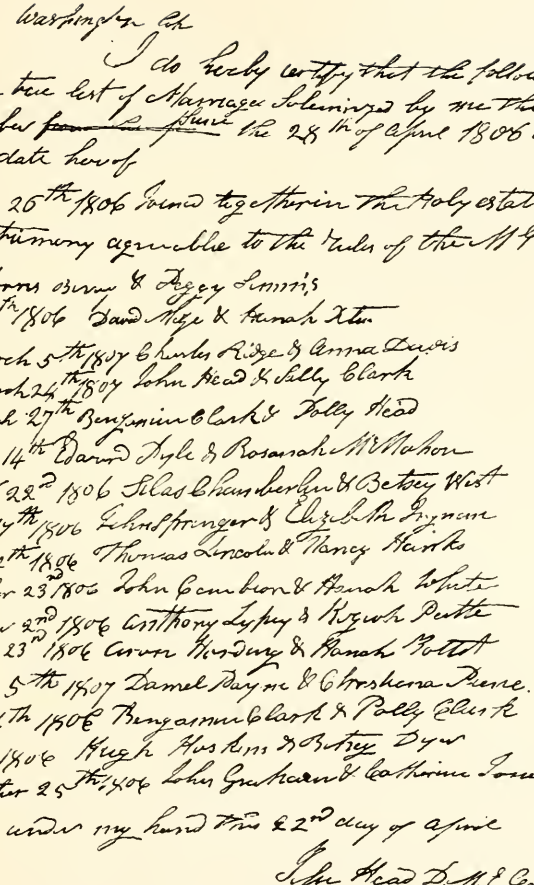
Among the many friends who visited at the old Berry homestead was one cousin, some six years older than Nancy, known as Thomas Lincoln. His mother, Mary Shipley, was the oldest sister of Nancy's mother. She had been married in Virginia before the migration of the family to Kentucky, to Abraham Lincoln,

of Rockingham County. This Abraham Lincoln was a well-to-do farmer, owning a tract of some two hundred and forty acres of land. His father, John Lincoln, had come into Virginia from Pennsylvania, probably influenced to this step by his friend, Daniel Boone, who had moved to North Carolina with his father's family in 1748. Daniel Boone had never been satisfied, however, to stay in North Carolina, and in 1769 he had begun to explore the land to the westward. Finally, in 1773, he had moved with his family and a few neighbors to Kentucky. Abraham Lincoln, born of a race of pioneers, became restless in his Virginia home, as he heard from

time to time from the Boones and others of the settlers in the new country, and finally in 1780 he sold his Virginia property, went to Kentucky, entered a large tract of land, and returning, moved his family. Eight years later, when he was killed by Indians, he owned twelve thousand acres of land.

According to the laws of Kentucky governing property, nearly all of his estate went to his oldest son, Mordecai. His youngest son, Thomas, who was only nine years old at his death, received nothing. He lived about with one and another members of his family, and eventually went to Elizabethtown and learned the carpenter trade of his cousin,

Joseph Hanks. He seems to have made good progress at his trade, for, according to an old and trustworthy acquaintance, he had the "best set of tools in the country" and was a good carpenter for those days. No doubt, at Red Hill, the home of Joseph Hanks, he saw his Cousin Nancy at times. He may have met her when visiting his brother Mordecai, who lived not far from the Berrys, Nancy's home. At all events the acquaintance between the two ripened into love and they became engaged. It has been inferred by those who have made no investigation of Thomas Lincoln's life that Nancy Hanks made a very poor choice of a husband. The



Washington Co

I do Hereby certify that the following is a true list of Marriages Solemnized by me Thomas Lincoln from the 28th of April 1806 until the date hereof

June 26th 1806 Joined together in the Holy estate of Matrimony agreeable to the Rules of the M. E. Ch

Morris Burn & Peggy Linnis
Nov 27th 1806 David Meje & Hannah Ketron
March 5th 1807 Charles Ridge & Anna Davis
march 24th 1807 John Head & Sally Clark
mach 27th Benjamin Clark & Polly Head
Jan 14th David Pyle & Rosanah McMahon
Dec 28th 1806 Silas Chamberlin & Betsey West
June 17th 1806 Ichabod Stranger & Elizabeth Ingram
June 12th 1806 Thomas Lincoln & Nancy Hanks
September 23rd 1806 John Coulson & Hannah White
October 2nd 1806 Anthony Lytle & Rozah Pettit
October 23rd 1806 Aaron Woodey & Hannah Pollett
April 5th 1807 Daniel Raynes & Christiana Pierce.
July 21th 1806 Benjamin Clark & Polly Clark
May - 1806 Hugh Haskins & Betsey Dyer
September 25th 1806 John Gutherd & Catherine Jones

Given under my hand this 22nd day of April 1807

John Head D. M. E. Ch

Minister's Return of Marriage of Nancy Hanks to Thomas Lincoln.—(*Facsimile from the original discovered about 1885 through the efforts of Mrs. Charlotte Vawter and Mr Squire Whitehill Thompson of Springfield Kentucky.*

facts do not warrant this theory. Thomas Lincoln had been forced from his boyhood to shift for himself in a young and undeveloped country. He is known to have been a man who in spite of this wandering life contracted no bad habits. He was temperate and honest, and his name is recorded in more than one place in the records of Kentucky. He was a church-goer, and, if tradition may be believed, a stout defender of his peculiar religious views. He held advanced ideas of what was already an important public question in Kentucky, the right to hold negroes as slaves. One of his old friends has said of him and his wife, Nancy Hanks, that they

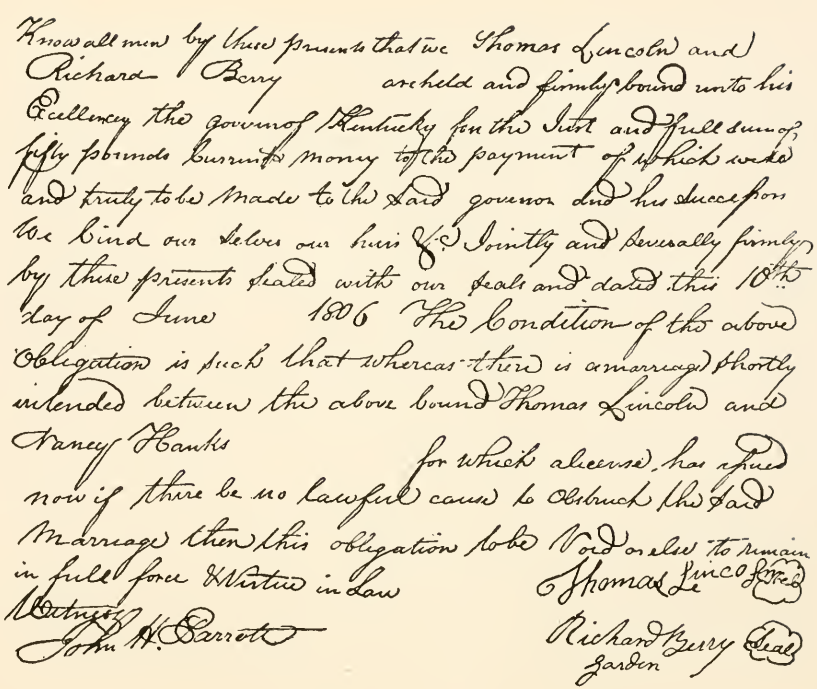
were "just steeped full of notions about the wrongs of slavery and the rights of men, as explained by Thomas Jefferson and Thomas Paine." These facts show that he must have been a man of some natural intellectual attainment. He was a companionable man too, and famous as a story-teller, an accomplishment which seems to have been common to the Lincolns, for Kentucky traditions say that Mordecai Lincoln, Thomas' brother, was one of the famous story-tellers of the country. Considering the disadvantages under which he had labored, he had a very good start in life when he became engaged to Nancy Hanks. He had a trade and owned a farm

which he had bought in 1803 in Buffalo, and also land in Elizabethtown. If all the conditions of his life be taken into consideration, it is not true, as has been said, that Thomas Lincoln was at this time a shiftless and purposeless man. In appearance he was short and stout, with dark hair, a full face, gray eyes, and prominent nose. He is said to have been one of the strongest men in his county, the terror of wrestlers and evil-doers.

The traditions of Nancy Hanks' appearance at this time all agree in calling her a beautiful girl. She is said to have been of medium height, weighing about one hundred and thirty pounds, with

light hair, beautiful eyes, a sweet sensitive mouth, and a kindly and gentle manner.

According to the customs of the time the marriage bond was entered before the ceremony took place. This was properly done on June 12th, 1806, as the fac-simile of the original page shows. Two days later the marriage ceremony was performed at the home of Richard Berry, by the Rev. Jesse Head, a Methodist preacher of Washington County, Ky. This Jesse Head was one of the characters of the time. He was not only a preacher but a carpenter, an editor, and a country judge. He held advanced notions in both religion and politics, and



Know all men by these presents that we Thomas Lincoln and Richard Berry are held and firmly bound unto his Excellency the governor of Kentucky for the just and full sum of fifty pounds current money to the payment of which well and truly to be made to the said governor and his successors we bind our selves our heirs &c. jointly and severally firmly by these presents sealed with our seals and dated this 10th day of June 1806 The condition of the above obligation is such that whereas there is a marriage shortly intended between the above bound Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks for which a license has issued now if there be no lawful cause to obstruck the said marriage then this obligation to be Void or else to remain in full force & Virtue in Law

Witness John H. Parrott

Thomas Lincoln Seal

Richard Berry Seal

Garden

Facsimile of Thomas Lincoln's Marriage Bond.

it was from him that Thomas Lincoln is said to have imbibed many of his ideas on the slavery question. As required by the law of the time, Jesse Head returned the marriage bond of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, as will be seen from an examination of the facsimile, page 63. He also gave to the new couple a marriage certificate (page 55).

Thus the marriage between the two was duly recorded; but years afterwards, when the son of this union had become one of the greatest men of the country, his enemies, believing that his origin was humble, sought to make it dishonest as well. The story was spread that his father and mother

were never married, and it came to be generally believed. A mere accident led to its investigation. In 1882 Capt. J. W. Wartman, clerk of the United States Court at Evansville, Ind., was talking with a distinguished Kentucky citizen, Christopher Columbus Graham. Dr. Graham was born at Worthington's Station, near Danville, Ky., in 1784. He lived in the State until his death at Louisville in 1885. This long period was to the very end one of useful activity. A physician by profession, Dr. Graham was by his love of nature a botanist, geologist, and naturalist. His observations on the flora, fauna, and strata of Kentucky are quoted on

I do hereby certify that by authority of License
I did join the Clerks Office of Washington Co I
have Solemnized the Rites of Matrimony between
Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, June
12th 1806 A D. agreeable to the Rites and Ceremonies
of the Methodist Episcopal Church witness
my hand

Jesse Head D E M C

Marriage Certificate of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, signed by Rev. Jesse Head.

both sides of the Atlantic by scientists. For many years Dr. Graham was the owner of the famous Harrodsburg Springs. About 1852 he sold this property to the War Department of the United States as a retreat for invalid military officers. After the sale of the springs he spent most of his time in study and in arranging his fine cabinet of Kentucky geology and natural history before selling it to the Louisville Library Association. Naturally Dr. Graham had known in his lifetime most of the inhabitants of his State. In his conversation with Mr. Wartman he said that he was present at the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy

Hanks. Mr. Wartman knew of the doubt which had been thrown upon this marriage, and realizing the historical importance of such a testimony, and thinking that it might lead to the discovery of documentary proofs of the marriage, he secured from Mr. Graham the following affidavit:

"I, Christopher C. Graham, now of Louisville, Ky., aged ninety-eight years, on my oath say: That I was present at the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, in Washington County, near the town of Springfield, Kentucky; that one Jesse Head, a Methodist preacher of Springfield, Kentucky, performed the ceremony. I knew the said

Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks well, and know the said Nancy Hanks to have been virtuous and respectable, and of good parentage. I do not remember the exact date of the marriage, but was present at the marriage aforesaid; and I make this affidavit freely, and at the request of J. W. Wartman, to whom, for the first time, I have this day incidentally stated the fact of my presence at the said wedding of President Lincoln's father and mother. I make this affidavit to vindicate the character of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, and to put to rest forever the legitimacy of Abraham Lincon's birth. I was formerly proprietor of Har-

rodsburg Springs, I am a retired physician, and am now a resident of Louisville, Kentucky. I think Felix Grundy was also present at the marriage of said Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, the father and mother of Abraham Lincoln. The said Jesse Head, the officiating minister at the marriage aforesaid, afterward removed to Harrodsburg, Kentucky, and edited a paper there, and died at that place.

"CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS GRAHAM.

"Subscribed and sworn to before me this March 20th, A.D. 1882. N. C. Butler, Clerk United States Circuit Court, First District Indiana. By J. W. Wartman, Deputy Clerk."

This affidavit attracted wide attention at the time and an investigation was at once begun. Gradually the documents which have been quoted above were unearthed, owing largely to the efforts of Mrs. Vanter, and Mr. Thompson of Louisville, Ky.

The cabin in which Nancy and Thomas were married still stands in Beechland, near Springfield. One of their old neighbors once said: "It was a large house for those days when men slept with their guns under their pillows. It was twice as large as the meeting-house." The marriage was fixed in the memory of the old inhabitants by a grand infair, which was given by Nancy s

guardian, J. H. Parrott. Christopher Columbus Graham wrote once of this celebration: "I came to the Lincoln-Hanks wedding in 1806. Rev. or Judge Jesse Head was one of the most prominent men there, as he was able to own slaves, but did not on principle. Next came Mordecai Lincoln, at one time a member of the Kentucky Legislature."

He then tells how at the wedding feast they had bear meat, venison, wild turkey, ducks, and "a sheep that the two families barbecued whole over coals of wood burned in a pit, and covered with green boughs to keep the juices in."

## CHAPTER IV.

MR. GRAHAM is not the only one who has left a record of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks at this time. Among the many hundreds of letters which have been written in regard to Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln one seems to have a truer ring than many. This was written by Samuel Haycroft, formerly clerk of Elizabethtown, Ky., and is dated April 18th, 1874. He says: "In the Louisville *Courier* of February 20th, 1874, is a communication about the Lincoln family which

has the impress of truth. I knew Mordecai Lincoln, Thomas Lincoln, and the Berrys. I have no idea who was the author, the initials alone being given, but I have no doubt that it is substantially the true history. After the marriage of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks he brought her to Elizabethtown, where he lived and worked at his carpenter's trade. A house is still standing in this neighborhood, the inside work of which he did. I knew him well. He had one child born in Elizabethtown, who died afterward. He then moved to a place called Buffalo, about fourteen miles from Elizabethtown, and here Abraham was born. They

then moved about four miles to the head of Knob Creek, in the same county. Then he moved to Indiana, where I lost sight of him until Nancy was dead, and he came back to Elizabethtown and married a widow Johnston, whose maiden name was Sally Bush. I was then clerk, and knew all about it."

This "communication," to which Mr. Haycroft referred as having "the impress of truth," was as follows:

"Some time since there fell into my hands by chance an evening journal containing a letter to the *Louisville Commercial*, in which it was hinted that there had existed clouds in the public mind as to

the marriage of Abraham Lincoln's mother and father. In the year 1859 I went to Springfield, Ky., to teach, and was in that same neighborhood when Lincoln received the nomination for President. On the announcement of the news of the candidate all were on the *qui vive* to know who the stranger was, so unexpectedly launched on a perilous sea. A farmer remarked that he should not be surprised if this was the son of Thomas Lincoln and Nancy Hanks, who were married at the home of Uncle Frank Berry. In a short time this supposition of the farmer was confirmed by the announcement of the father's name. A few days later I visited

an aged lady, named Mrs. Litsey, who interested me much by giving me a description of the wedding of the father and mother of the new candidate, she having been a friend of the bride and present at the marriage.

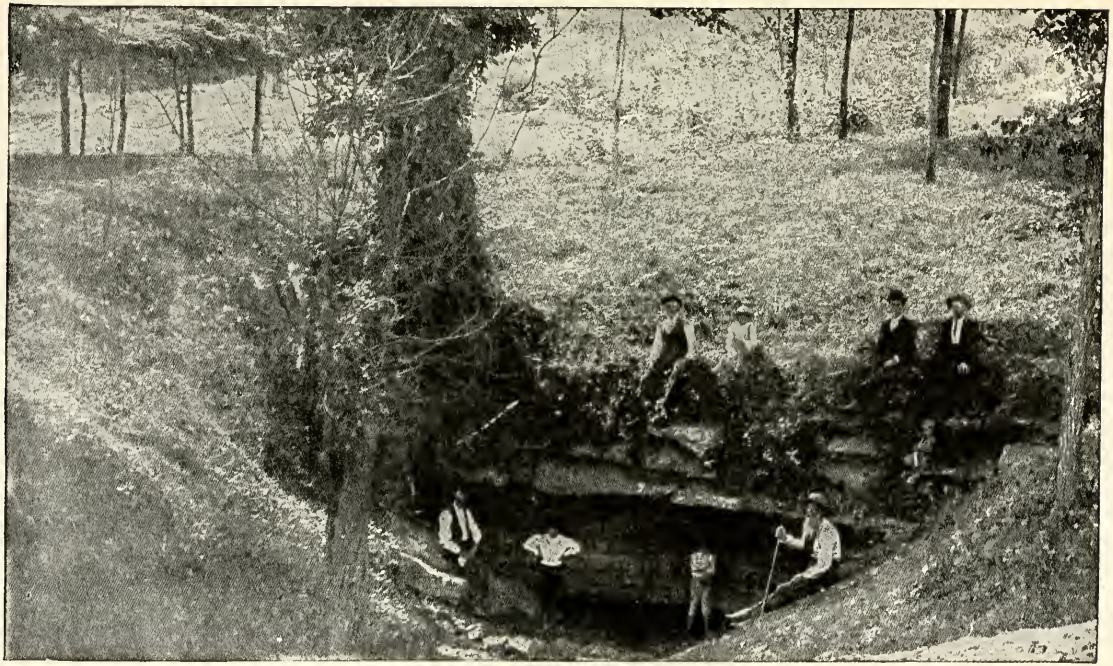
"In 1866, after the liberation of four million of slaves had made the name of Abraham Lincoln memorable, I was again in the neighborhood and visited the old home, in which were celebrated the nuptials above referred to. Its surroundings are among the most picturesque in Kentucky. The Beach Fork, a small river of wonderful meanderings, flows near, and is lost to view in a semicircular amphitheatre of hills.

While surveying the surrounding landscape I thought it not strange that inspiration had fallen upon the mother of him who should be known as the liberator of the nineteenth century. The official record of this marriage will probably be found at Springfield.

"As I remember the story of Nancy Hanks, it ran thus: Her mother's name before marriage was Shipley, and one of her sisters married a Mr. Berry; another sister married Robert Mitchell, who also came to Kentucky about the year 1780. While on the journey the Mitchells were attacked by the Indians and Mrs. Mitchell fatally wounded, and their only daughter, Sarah, a

child eleven years old, was captured and carried into Michigan, where a squaw saved her life by hiding her behind a big log. Mr. Mitchell mounted his horse, and, accompanied by his friend, General Adair, went in search of his daughter, but was drowned in the Ohio River while attempting to cross it. The sons of this father and mother were afterward scattered to different parts of the State.

"One of them, Daniel, settled in Washington County, on the Beach Fork, a few miles from Springfield, and near his two cousins, Frank and Ned Berry. To these cousins came Nancy Hanks, and the legend is that



ROCK CREEK SPRING ON THE LINCOLN FARM.

'her cheerful disposition and active habits were a dower to those pioneers.' Soon after Mad Anthony Wayne's treaty with the Indians in 1794 or 1795, the lost Sarah was returned to her friends, and lived in the home of her uncle, Richard Berry, with her cousins, Frank and Ned Berry and Nancy Hanks, until both girls were married.

"These girls were as intimate as sisters. Sarah Mitchell was the pupil of Nancy Hanks in learning to spin flax, the latter being adept in that now lost art. It was the custom in those days to have spinning parties, on which occasions the wheels of the ladies were carried to the house desig-

nated, to which the competitors, distaff in hand, came ready for the work of the day. At a given hour the wheels were put in motion, and the filmy fibre took the form of firmly lengthened strands in their mystic hands. Tradition says that Nancy Hanks generally bore the palm, her spools yielding the longest and finest thread. Abraham Lincoln was not an exception to the rule that great men require that their mothers should be talented.

"Thomas Lincoln came, it is believed, into this neighborhood to visit Mordecai Lincoln, who lived near Major Berry, and there learned of the skill of Nancy Hanks. Like Ulysses he was am-

bitious and later became the husband of Nancy Hanks, whose thread of gold has been woven by the hand and pen of Abraham Lincoln into the warp and woof of the national Constitution.

"Sarah Mitchell was a woman of a high order of talent. She married a Virginian, had many fine children, and retained until her death the greatest veneration for the memory of her cousin, whose name she gave to one of her daughters. Modesty has laid the impress of silence upon these relatives of a noble woman, but when the voice of calumny has presumed to sully her name, they hurl the accusation to the ground and proclaim her the beautiful

character they had learned to love long before they knew that to her had been given an honored son.

"From one who has learned from saintly lips to admire her grandmother's cousin.

"C. S. V. H."

The writer of this letter, Mrs. C. S. H. Vawter, was a Massachusetts woman, a daughter of John Hobart of Leicester, and a connection of Garrett S. Hobart, Vice-President of the United States. She was the granddaughter of Sarah Shipley Mitchell, and therefore properly referred to Nancy Hanks as her grandmother's cousin. Her grandmother afterward married John Thompson, and one

of their children was named Nancy Hanks Thompson.

After the marriage ceremony at Beechland, Thomas Lincoln took his wife to Elizabethtown, where he had built a cabin home for her. The life of the family there was of course the extremely simple life of the pioneer of those days. One large room, with a loft overhead, reached by a rough staircase or ladder, an outside shed used for a store-room and summer kitchen, was the ordinary home. These cabins were made habitable in winter by a huge fireplace, over which all the cooking was done; a crane on which to hang the iron pots and a Dutch oven, constituting the cooking outfit.

The furniture was home-made. Rough slabs, into which logs had been fitted, made the chairs and benches. The table and bedsteads were also of home manufacture, and the cover-lids for the beds were also made by the busy housewife on the home-made loom and wheel. The heavy skins of animals furnished all other coverings and rugs.

The next spring after her marriage Nancy's first child was born, a little girl known as Sarah. The Lincolns were not contented at Elizabethtown, however, and in 1808 moved to the farm which Thomas had bought in 1803 and which was only fourteen miles away.

Until within a few years the old house at Elizabethtown, where Thomas Lincoln first took his bride, Nancy Hanks, stood as Thomas himself had built it, on what was then known as Mill Creek. It was burned down accidentally a few years ago, but the well hard by the house is still there, to mark the place where Abraham Lincoln's father and mother spent the first two years of their happy married life, and where their first little one, Sarah, was born, in 1807.

No doubt, Thomas Lincoln had been slowly preparing his land in Buffalo for occupation ever since he had acquired the title to it. This picturesque farm was near

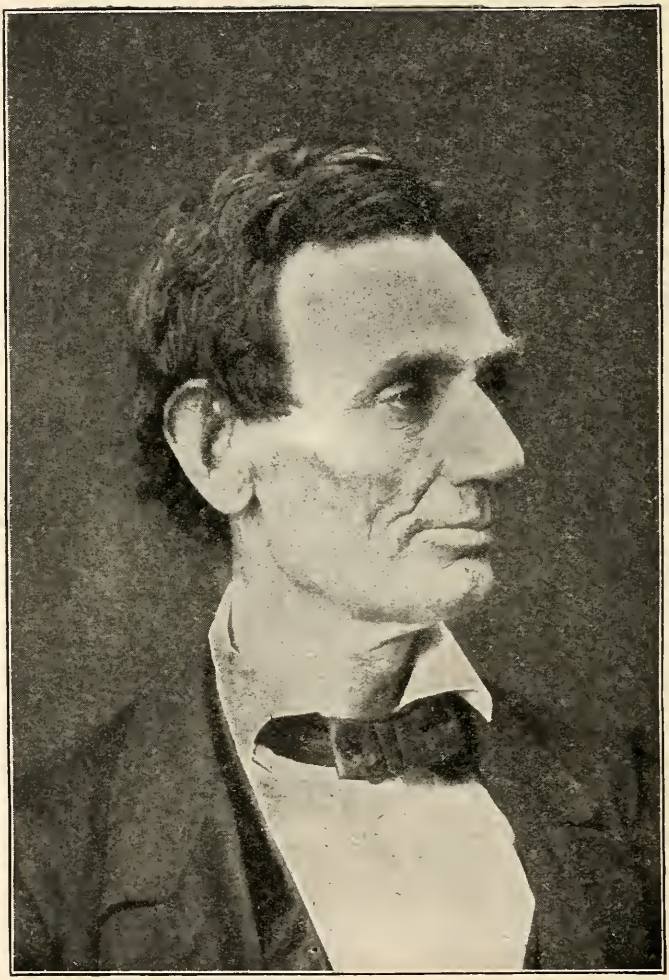
the stream known as the Big South Fork of Nolan Creek. The cabin which was built there exists to-day, although it has had a checkered history. It was torn down at one time and the logs piled up, but in 1885 the farm was purchased by Colonel Dennett of New York, and generously given to the State of Kentucky for a public park, to be known as the Lincoln Park. Close by the house is a remarkable spring, which for many years gave the name of Rock Spring Farm to the place.

This house on Nolan Creek, Buffalo as the place is called, was frequently visited while the Lincolns lived there by their friend, Dr. Graham, who tells us, "the

Lincolns had a cow and calf, milk and butter, a good feather bed, for I have slept in it." The next year after they moved to their farm Nancy's second child a boy, came. He was born on February 9th, 1809, and was called Abraham, a name common in both the Hanks and Lincoln families. The boy grew to be healthy and strong under the influence of the vigorous country air and wholesome simple country life. He was much like his mother's family, and as he grew older this resemblance increased. Indeed, the resemblance between Abraham Lincoln when he grew to be a man and certain members of the Hanks family is startling. On

the next page is a picture of the late Rev. Stedman Wright Hanks, of Cambridge, Mass. He was a descendant of Benjamin Hanks, the brother of Nancy Hanks' grandfather, William A. This picture has been frequently taken for Abraham Lincoln by those who knew the latter, as was Mr. Hanks himself even during Lincoln's life. A comparison with the facing picture will show the same characteristics. He had gray eyes and brown hair, and was tall and angular like Lincoln.

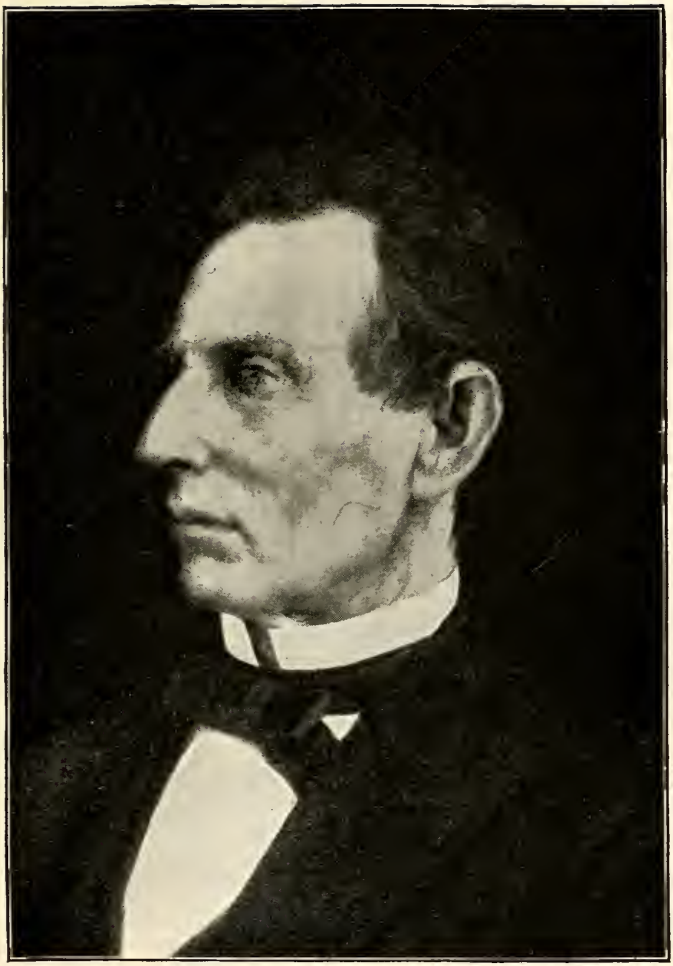
When little Abraham was four years old the first event of his life, which probably made much impression upon him, took place. This was leaving Nolan Creek



ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Taken in 1860.

*Copyright by George B. Ayres, Artist, Philadelphia, and reproduced here by his special permission.*



Rev. Stedman Wright Hanks.

(The remarkable resemblance to the portrait of Abraham Lincoln on facing page, is evident at a glance.)

farm to move four miles away to Knob Creek, a little stream flowing into the Rolling Fork River. The new cabin was beautifully located on the slope of what is known as Muldraugh's Hill. Nancy Hanks' life in her new home was probably a duplication of what it had been at Buffalo, the same simple round of duties of milking, churning, spinning, and caring for her children. These children had become, we know from tradition, the joy and care of her life. She was well educated and eager that they too should study. The books in the household were few: a Bible, the "Kentucky Preceptor," the school reader of the period, perhaps a

copy of "Æsop's Fables," but it is certain that these books Nancy Hanks read often to her children, and it was she who taught them their letters. The little girl Sarah was old enough to go to school, and Abraham was sent with her.

The schools of the period were irregular in term, and not thoroughly satisfactory in instruction. Generally the teachers were stray men of some little education, who were working their way westward or eastward, and stopped there a little time to earn their board and a pittance perhaps by two or three months of teaching. One of the teachers that Abraham Lincoln in later life remembered and mentioned in his autobiography was

Caleb Hazel, a man whose family had intermarried with the Halls and Hankses. Lincoln, under the instructions of his occasional masters and his mother's teaching, became an ambitious student, and one of his old playmates, Austin Gollagher, a man who but recently died, tells how Abraham used to bring in a brush to burn in the fireplace in the evening, that he might have light to read by.

Simple as the home was, and hard as the work no doubt was at times, great as the privations may have been, the picture that we have of Nancy Hanks' life at this period is not an unpleasant one. Her children were vigorous and happy, and evidently eager to

learn. She had the joy of helping them and of seeing their growth. She was hospitable too, and many an old neighbor has left reminiscences of visits to her home, one of whom said: "The Lincolns' home at Knob Creek was a very happy one. I have lived in this part of the country all my life and knew Nancy Hanks and Thomas Lincoln well. She was a loving and tender wife, adored by her husband and children, as she was by all who knew her. I also know those who have said aught against her, and know that they were political enemies of Abraham Lincoln."

We have, too, some amusing reminiscences of little Abraham

at this time. One of the granddaughters of Joseph Hanks, Jr., who inherited his father's one hundred and fifty acres of land, said: "When Abraham Lincoln was a district lawyer he frequently visited grandfather and used to relate with great glee how, when a little boy, his Uncle Joseph once whipped him soundly for teasing him at his work. Grandfather loved his sister Nancy dearly, and her gentle and trusting nature was embodied in her noble son, who was an uncrowned king among men. To her early Christian training he owed his simple faith that helped him guide the ship of state safely through the storm of civil war, and in-

spired a hand that bade a race go free."

One of Joseph's grandsons has also said: "Grandfather was of all things a pioneer. He belonged to that restless class of which Daniel Boone was the highest type. He was a man of sterling honesty, undoubted courage, and high worth. He always spoke of his angel sister Nancy with reverent emotion. She taught him to read. Grandfather used to talk of Thomas Lincoln more than any of his kin, and often told us children stories of their life together at Elizabethtown, and of a visit to him when Abraham was a little child, and of his most unpromising appearance. Grandfather died before

Lincoln attained his highest honors."

Life on the farm at Knob Creek went on for three years in this way. A third child was born to Nancy, but he lived only a few months. Thomas Lincoln was no doubt at this time becoming yearly more and more interested in the opening of the country. He even was venturing into that dangerous commerce, carrying produce to New Orleans, which numbers of the pioneers along the Ohio River plied at this period. It was a common practice among them to build a flatboat, and, loading it with the produce of their farms, work their way down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers

to New Orleans, then the great market of the West It was a long trip, attended by many risks to the produce, but if made in safety enabled the farmer-merchant to dispose of his stuffs to advantage. It gave him too a whiff of the life of the world, which perhaps was quite as strong a reason for his taking the trip as the hope of gaining a little money. It was probably about 1815 that Thomas Lincoln built a flatboat, and, loading it with a cargo of whatever he could gather from his farm, floated down what is now Salt River into the Ohio. Christopher Columbus Graham has recorded his recollections of this trip:

"Thomas Lincoln, like his son after him, had a notion that fortunes could be made by trips to New Orleans by flatboats. This was dangerous, from snags and whirlpools in the rivers, from Indians, and even worse—pirates of the French, Canadians, and half-breeds. Steam was unknown, and the flats had to be sold in New Orleans, as they could not be rowed back against the current. The neighbors joked Tom for building his boat too high and narrow, from an idea he had about speed, that has since been adopted by ocean steamers. But he lacked in ballast. He loaded her up with deer and bear hams and buffalo, which last was then

not so plenty for meat or hides as when the Boone brothers came in. Besides he had wax, for bees seemed to follow the white people, and he had wolf and coon and mink and beaver skins, gentian root. . . .

"He started down Knob Creek when it was flush with rains. When he got to the Ohio it was flush too, and full of whirlpools and snags. He had his tool-chest along, intending to stop and work in Indiana and take down another boat. But he never got to the Mississippi with that, for it upset, and he only saved his chest and part of his load because he was near to the Indiana shore. He stored what he saved under bark,

and came home afoot, and in debt to neighbors who had helped him. But people never pressed a man that lost by Indians or water."

According to tradition, Thomas Lincoln after this catastrophe to his flatboat, made a trip north of the Ohio River into Indiana, prospecting for new land. He seems to have been satisfied with what he found, for when he returned it was with the idea of selling and moving his family into Indiana. He already had one brother in the State, Josiah Lincoln, who had settled on the big Blue River, and it may have been reports which had come back to Kentucky from his brother which helped Thomas Lincoln to decide to make the

change. Years later his son wrote of this removal that it was partly on account of slavery, but chiefly on account of the difficulty in land titles in Kentucky. At all events, in the year 1816 the family prepared to leave Kentucky. Their household furniture and farm tools were packed into a wagon. Whatever of stock they may have owned was driven behind and the little procession started. The first part of their journey could not have been very difficult, for at that time the highway to the Ohio was excellent. It was after crossing the river into Indiana that their pilgrimage became troublesome; then they no doubt literally cut their way through the

forests to the land which Thomas Lincoln had taken up for himself and family. This land lay in what is now Spencer County, Ind. It was on the Little Pigeon Creek, about fifteen miles north of the Ohio River and a mile and a half east of Gentryville.

To Nancy Hanks this removal from Kentucky must have been full of sadness. She was leaving behind a great circle of relatives and friends. She was leaving behind too the grave of her youngest child, and one of the most pathetic incidents which has been preserved to us of her life is the visit she made to the little grave with her two older children, just before she started on

her journey into the Indiana wilderness.

The overland trip, while it may have had its perils, was not necessarily very difficult or unpleasant. This journey was attended by none of the dangerous features which were characteristic of the Wilderness Road. Indians and wild animals no longer threatened. There was much of amusement and adventure in these trips, and no doubt Nancy Hanks, as she rode in or walked by the wagon, found much of delight in the joy of her children over the to them novel and exciting journey.

It was after Indiana was reached and the camp in the wilderness, which was to be their shelter was

THE LINCOLN FARM IN INDIANA.

built, that her hardships began. What was called a half-faced camp, a species of log lean-to, without doors or windows, was their first home, and no doubt the winter of 1816 and 1817 must have been a trying one for Nancy Hanks.

The next year Thomas Lincoln succeeded in building a cabin. It was a rude one, but a sufficient shelter. The family began too to find new friends and neighbors in that far distant country. They joined the Pigeon Creek Baptist Church, and gradually became associated in whatever interested the neighborhood. In that year, too, several of Nancy's friends and relatives moved to Indiana, so that the

new home became more interesting as it became more habitable.

Some reminiscences in southwestern Indiana still tell of Nancy Hanks, and of the impression of gentleness and brightness she left everywhere she went, like a ray of sunshine. Indeed, the last words recorded that she ever said were, "Cheer up!" This was but a few days before her death, when, as the Rev. Allen Brooner tells us, she went to visit his mother, who was very ill, and who said despondently: "Mrs. Lincoln, I am going to die. You will not see me again while living.' "You must not say that," said Mrs. Lincoln. "Why, you will live longer than I. So cheer up!"

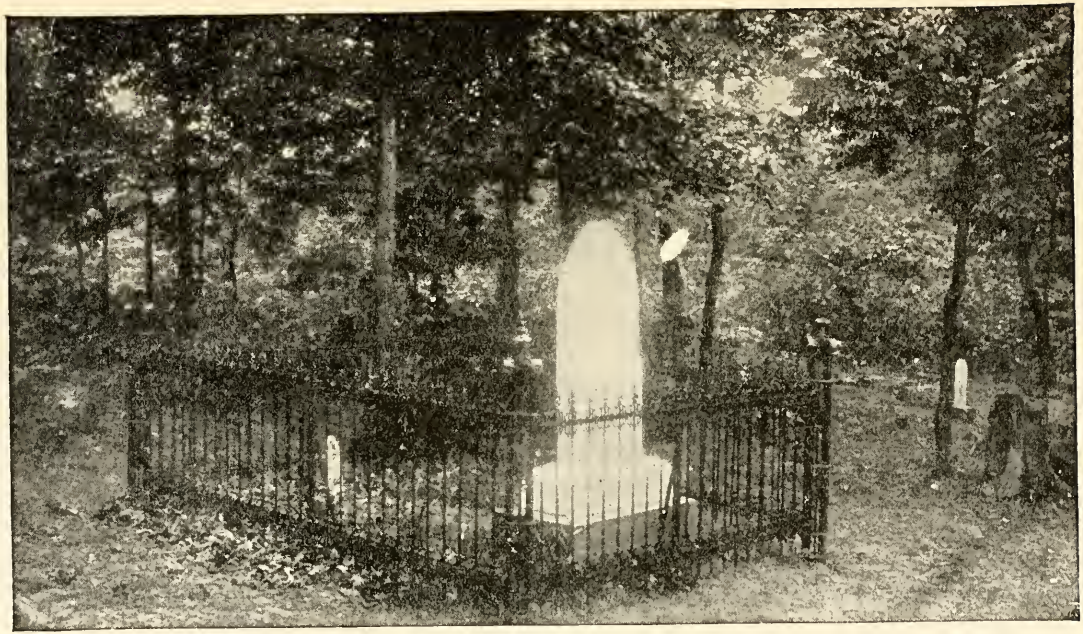
It was but a few days later, on the fifth day of the glorious October of the year 1818 that this prophecy came true and the body of Nancy Hanks was laid to rest under the golden autumn leaves, in a lonely and yet enchanted spot on the top of the hill near Lincoln Station, Ind. There where Nancy and her boy had often sat together and watched the gorgeous colors of the glorious sun set far over the hills is now a simple white headstone which says:

"Nancy Hanks Lincoln, Mother of President Lincoln, Died October 5, A.D. 1818. Age thirty-five years. Erected by a friend of her martyred son."

To this quiet, restful spot not

even a wagon road leads. It is better so, for Nancy Hanks had finished her work. She had kept the faith.

The first letter that Abraham Lincoln ever wrote with that hand which was afterward to electrify the nation was about his mother—that mother whom he had loved so dearly and had so early lost. This letter was written by Abraham when he was ten years old, several months after his mother's death. It was to Parson David Elkins, whom he asked to come and "preach a memorial service for my mother." So it happened one Sunday morning that two hundred people assembled about the Lincoln cab-



THE GRAVE OF NANCY HANKS.

in, and from there proceeded to the tree beneath which her body was laid to rest. There the touching services were read by Rev. David Elkins, who had ridden a hundred miles on horseback through the wilderness to preach the funeral sermon for Nancy Hanks, of whom Abraham Lincoln said in after years. "All that I am or hope to be I owe to my angel mother. Blessings on her memory."

OCT 21 1899